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March 4, 2005

The Honorable Donald H. Rumsfeld
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Rumsfeld:

I am in receipt of the Inspector General's Report from the Department of Defense concerning Lieutenant General William G. Boykin. In brief, they find that Lieutenant General Boykin's speaking appearances "violated applicable DoD regulations, because: (1) he failed to clear the content of his speeches with appropriate DoD security and public affairs personnel; (2) he failed to issue the required disclaimer on several occasions; and (3) he failed to report his receipt of one travel payment from a non-Government source on his 2002 Public Financial Disclosure Report."

In addition, the IG raised very serious issues concerning General Boykin's wearing government uniform while making private and controversial remarks, and his use of government-funded travel. These findings of wrongdoing are above and beyond the actual incendiary substance of the General's remarks, which as you know many find insulting to Muslim's and highly inappropriate, since the IG believed his "fitness for duty and judgment are subjective issues for consideration solely by appropriate management officials." Indeed, the IG confirms that there were "negative reactions" and "a national and international interest generated by [Boykin's] remarks." The IG further recommends that the Army "take appropriate corrective action with respect to L.G. Boykin." Based on my review of these findings and the IG's report, it is now clear to me that General Boykin should be relieved of his very important and sensitive duties in the Armed Forces, and I would urge you to immediately do so.

I need not remind you of the highly controversial and charged statements by General Boykin made while under your command, including remarks that Islamic extremists hate the United States because we're a Christian nation," that "our spiritual enemy will only be defeated if we come against them in the name of Jesus," that President Bush "is in the White House because

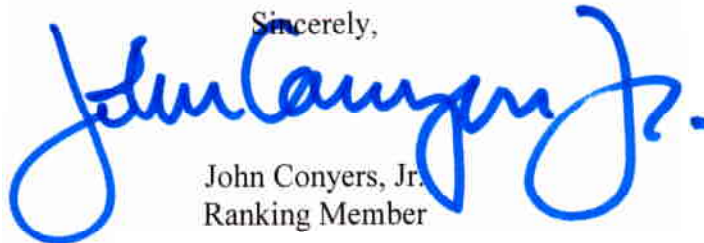
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God put him there,” and that Boykin’s “god was a real god and [the Muslim god] was an idol.” In the first attachment to the report, the Inspector General confirms that in every one of these instances (and in many others) General Boykin wore his official uniform.

Remarks of this nature disparage the very people we need to work with to win the war against terror. The fact that when making these remarks General Boykin violated several applicable DoD regulations make it all the more clear that the Armed Forces needs to act forcefully and quickly to demonstrate that this type of improper tolerance is not acceptable. We simply cannot afford to have such an extremist speaking on behalf of our nation and our military in violation of DoD rules.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I would ask that you respond to me though my committee staff at 2142 Rayburn Building, Washington, D.C. 20515, tel. 202-225-6504, fax 202-225-4423.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John Conyers, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member